



December 7-13 is Tell Someone They're Doing a Good Job Week

THE POWER OF POSITIVE FEEDBACK

"Praise, like gold and diamonds, owes its value only to its scarcity." - Samuel Johnson

Shine a Light on Things Done Right

Of those employees who have decided to leave a job, many say their choice was influenced by the fact that they didn't feel valued. It's no wonder, considering that the only positive feedback many employees receive comes from their supervisor during an annual review process. Telling someone they're doing a good job shouldn't be limited to an annual event, and it is not restricted to people in high positions. Acknowledging a peer, a supervisor, or someone from another department is an excellent way to build morale.

Sharing words of encouragement also helps to reinforce positive behavior. Someone once said "shine light on what you want to grow." If you call attention to those things that work well or those things you appreciate, you let someone know that what they are doing is important or effective.

Telling someone they are doing a good job doesn't need to be confined to the workplace. When we let our friends and loved ones know that we are paying attention to their efforts, and acknowledge their accomplishments, we strengthen those important bonds.

There's Value in Validation

Perhaps you learned that your dad thought you did a great job when you overheard him telling someone else about it, or because he gave you a pat on the back when you brought home a good report card. While there are many non-verbal ways that we communicate that we think someone is doing a good job, there is enormous power in our words. We like to hear that we're doing a good job because it provides:

- Validation that we are doing the right things in the right way
- Motivation or encouragement
- Connections to those we value

Make Your Praise Meaningful

Sometimes we forget to tell those around us that we think they're doing a good job because we get caught up in the urgent and forget about the important. Although the time spent praising someone for good work may only take a moment or two, we must first make sure that we have taken the time to pay attention to the work and admire the results. Remarks that include specific details give the praise meaning and make it more genuine.

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For some, praising others is uncomfortable. Offering praise may initially feel forced but that doesn't mean you shouldn't do it. Even a simple "Thank you for _____. I really appreciated it" is a good place to start.

Waiting too long to let someone know that you've noticed what they've done should not be an excuse to forget about it. Simply begin with "I'm sorry I didn't say this sooner. I want you to know that I really admired the way you _____."

On the other hand, praise loses its impact when it is overused. Consider a child who has been asked to clean up her toys. If you clap every time little Mary puts something in the toy box, Mary will soon conclude that, in order for her to do what is expected, applause is required.

Say 'Well Done' Well

The keys to successfully providing positive feedback are found in the timing and intention of the message. The message will have the greatest impact if it is:

- Specific
- Appropriate to the relationship
- Offered immediately or shortly after the act or behavior

Instead of "Good job, Joe" try "Joe, you did a great job on your last project. I could tell that you put a lot of thought into it. It was clear and gave me something to think about."

For more information and tips about providing positive feedback, contact SYMMETRY at (414) 256-4800 or (800) 236-7905 for confidential assistance.

